

# **COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**CONGRESSMAN TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN**



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

**For Immediate Release  
January 11, 2005**

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### **Davis Statement on “High-Performance Government” Strategies**

**Washington, DC – Chairman Tom Davis of the Committee on Government Reform issued the following statement today on the Pardee RAND Graduate School’s new book, “*High-Performance Government: Structures, Leadership, Incentives:*”**

“In 2003, the Pardee RAND Graduate School launched the Volcker Initiative for Public Service to analyze the problems of the Federal government and listed ways to revitalize it to face the new challenges in a new century. This new book moves beyond those 2003 findings by drilling down into each subject category, providing insight and perspectives on how to approach issues of extreme importance to this Committee.

“I want to congratulate Robert Klitgaard and Paul Light on the new book. This collection of essays provides unique and insightful approaches to some of the most pressing issues facing the U.S. government today, such as how to deal with dysfunctional organizations, overcoming strategic staffing challenges, and finding ways to incentivize the federal workforce. The ideas and concepts developed and proposed in these essays will be very useful for the operations and agenda of this Committee in moving into the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. Among some of those issues are:

- **Executive Reorganization Authority.** “We need to look no further than the congressional deliberations on the creation of the Homeland Security Department and a National Intelligence Director for evidence that Congress is not terribly well-equipped to tackle organizational challenges: Too much turf, too many egos, far too much time. As hearings held by Government Reform over the past two years have shown, this same problem of poor organization exists in federal food safety oversight, federal child welfare programs, and multiple homeland security functions. Reauthorization of executive reorganization authority is the surest, most effective manner of proactively responding to organizational challenges – whether they concern agencies that impact homeland security directly, indirectly, or not at all.

“The President needs to be given the power to submit reorganization plans to Congress for a guaranteed, up-or-down vote. The President should have the ability to make changes to organizations without having to worry about his proposal getting watered down or just plain blocked in Congress. Congress, of course, retains the ultimate say.”

- **Streamlining the Presidential Appointments Process.** “As this book demonstrates, the presidential appointments system is broken – it takes too long to confirm individuals to key positions, and the process itself often drives away some of the best qualified to serve. Financial disclosure requirements are supposed to protect against conflict of interest concerns. But they have become proxy statements for a nominee’s net worth, with more detail than necessary.

“Legislation is needed to simplify financial disclosure reporting for appointees by substantially reducing the amount of detail these appointees must provide regarding their sources of income, assets and liabilities – while requiring more than enough information to make sure that potential conflicts of interest can be identified. The changes – which include raising the minimum thresholds for reporting, lowering the top valuation categories and reducing the number of categories overall – return the focus to using the forms for conflict of interest determinations rather than statements of net worth.”

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